HAMATEURCHATTER

One of the World's Oldest Continuously Active Radio Amateur Clubs - since 1917

Vol. 16 No. 04 - April, 2008

President's Letter
by Howard, AB9FH

I took advantage of the nice weather and set up the radio on the patio Sunday. I heard quite a few stations but was unable to make any contacts. Still, it is exciting to hear exotic faraway places like Trinidad, Crete, and Florida. I think I still have more to learn about how to operate my radio at maximum power. I am getting good at putting up the 20m dipole, and I did get a chance to explain some things to non-licensed members of the family.

Many have said that a ham radio license is a license to learn. Some of my favorite meeting programs have been ones where I learned something completely new. It is also good to get real information from someone who has actually done the things I have only read about. Sometimes I feel like my ham radio knowledge is pizza-shaped: broad, well rounded but only 3/4 inch thick! As you might have heard by now, the plans for a formal Extra class fell through because there just weren't enough non-holiday Saturdays left. Not when you count major hamfests as holidays. Plan B – let's get together on a few Saturdays and those of you who want to get that last upgrade in before the new question pool can get your questions answered, or difficult concepts explained. Contact Mark, AB9CD, or the club for more information.

It was great to have Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R, from ARRL at our last meeting. He presented the club with a plaque in recognition of our upcoming 90th anniversary of affiliation. I will see if we can get a good picture of it for the website. I also had the chance to finally get to SuperFest the next day, if just for an hour or so, and to meet Dick Isely, W9GIG, the Central Division director.

Know someone who has a gift for the grill -- someone who likes to cook? We're currently in need of someone to take care of preparing and serving the food at the club picnic and Field Day. Don't forget to reserve the day yourself.

Reserve the preceding weekend, too, if you can. We will be at Pioneer Village to help them celebrate a free admission weekend (for Ozaukee County residents). The Saturday of that weekend is ARRL Kids Day, so there should be good opportunities for kids to make some interesting contacts. There will be staff there in costume. Hmm, that would make for some good SSTV or a very special QSL card!

Here's hoping that winter is now truly behind us. See you on the 24th!

73 de AB9FH.

MRAC Officers

President
Howard Parks AB9FH

Vice President
Joe Schwarz N9UX

Secretary
Sarah Parks KB9ZNC

Treasurer
Mark Tellier AB9CD

Board of Directors

Brian Bieger ('07-'09) KC9HEK

Pancho Doneis ('07-'09) KA9OFA

Tom Liebe ('06-'08) WI9TOM

Al Maahs ('07-'09) KC9IJJ

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Nets Heard in the Milwaukee Area

DAY	TIME	MHz	ACTIVITY
Daily	6:00-8:00 AM	14.2900	Milwaukee / Florida (SSB)
Daily	5:15-6:00 AM	3.9850	Wisconsin SSB net
Daily	7:30 AM	144.1550	Breakfast Round Table (SSB)
Daily	9:30 PM	3.9725	Country Cousins Net
Mon.	8:00 PM	146.8650-	ARES Net (Walworth and ARRL news)
Mon.	8:00 PM	146.4450	Emergency Net
Mon.	8:45 PM	147.1650	ARRL voice news (ARES)
Mon.	9:00 PM	50.1600	6 m. SSB Net
Mon.	9:00 PM	147.1650	ARES Net (Milwaukee-Waukesha)
Tue.	9:00 AM	50.1600	6 m. 2nd Shifters' SSB Net
Tue.	8:00 PM	144.2500	Badger Contesters (SSB)
Wed.	8:00 PM	28.365	MKE Guardian chptr 10-10 net
Wed.	8:00 PM	145.130-	ARRL voice news
Wed.	9:00 PM	145.130-	MAARS Swapnet
Wed.	8:00 PM	147.270+	Weather & Swap Net
Thu.	**8:00 PM**	**50.160**	**MRAC 6 m. SSB Net**
Thu.	9:00 PM	146.910-	Computer Net
Fri	**8:00 PM**	**28.490**	**MRAC W9RH 10 m. Net (SSB)**
Fri.	**9:00 PM**	**145.390-**	**W9RH 2 m. FM Net after 10 mtr. net**
Sat	9:00 PM	146.910-	Saturday Night Fun Net
Sun.	8:30 AM	3.985	QCWA (Chptr 55) (SSB)
Sun.	9:00 AM	145.565	X-Country Simplex Group (FM)
Sun.	10:00 AM	443.800	FM-38 link to 146.88 Baraboo Swapnet
Sun.	8:00 PM	28.365	MKE Guardian chptr 10-10 net
Sun.	8:00 PM	146.910-	Information Net
Sun.	9:00 PM	146.910-	Swap Net

2 meter repeaters are offset by 600 KHz - - 70 centimeter repeaters are offset by 5 MHz
SSB frequencies below 20 meters are LSB and for 20 meters and above are USB

HAMATEURCHATTER

HamateurChatter is the newsletter of MRAC (Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club), a not for profit organization for the advancement of amateur radio and the maintenance of fraternalism and a high standard of conduct.

MRAC Membership dues are $17.^{00}$ per year and run on a calendar year starting January 1.

MRAC general membership meetings are normally held at 7:00 p.m. the last Thursday of the month except for November (3rd Thursday due to Thanksgiving) and December, when Christmas dinner takes the place of a regular meeting.

Meetings are held at:

Redemption Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall
4057 N. Mayfair Rd.
Milwaukee, WI

Credits

Our thanks to our news contributors this month:

AB9CD W9IQ N9UX
AB9FH KA9OFA KB9ZNC
KF9PU

Our thanks also goes to:
Rita Doneis, Tom Fuszard, Al Maahs, and Hal Newton, for proofreading the 'Chatter this month.

Thanks also to Dick Wood for mailing the hard copy of the 'Chatter and to Joe Schwarz, who Emails the 'Chatter.

Thanks to Brian White, who administers our Web Site.

Tom Czaja, Tom Fuszard, Larry Noldan, and Mark Tellier who manage our VEC.

Thank YOU!

Upcoming Programs

The April 24th program will be by Glenn Schulz who will talk about

Fuel Cells and Other Alternative Energy Sources

May 29th meeting will feature our MRAC annual auction AND Nominations for officers of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two members of the BOD

General Membership Meeting 3/27/08

By Sarah Parks, KB9ZNC

The meeting was called to order at 8:27 p.m. by president Howard, AB9FH.

The first item on the Agenda was Buzz Talk.

Following that, Sarah, KB9ZNC, read the minutes of the last meeting. Pancho, KA9OFA, and Dwain, KC9MJJ, moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as read, and the motion passed.

Mark, AB9CD, read the treasurer's report. Significant items included a donation to the ARRL Education Fund in memory of Dick, WB9PTC, and our quasi-annual donation to Redemption Lutheran to keep us in their warm regards. Pancho, KA9OFA, and Hal, KB9OZN, moved and seconded the approval of the treasurer's report; the motion passed.

Old Business: Brian, K9LCQ, announced the winners of the FM Simplex Contest. Howard, AB9FH, reminded members that nominations were needed for the four officers and two board positions coming up for election in May.

Pancho, KA9OFA, reported that Field Day catering is still up in the air; he has been unable to contact our intended chef.

In VEC news, Mark, AB9CD, noted that there will still be testing on the last Saturdays of March through May.

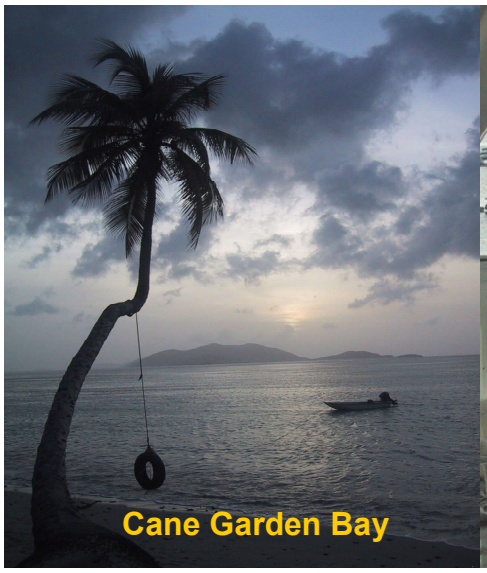
The intended Extra class fell through due to calendar conflicts, but Mark is planning discussion sessions in April. There isn't time for a full class, but the club would like to offer help to those who want to pass that Extra exam before the new question pool goes into effect (July 1st).

New Business: Howard, AB9FH, stated that he would like help in filling out the QSL cards for the 90th anniversary event. Dave, WB9BWP, has recently updated the club history book and added the QSL cards from that event.

Pancho, KA9OFA, moved to adjourn the meeting, and was seconded by Dwain, KC9MJJ. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Program for April 24 meeting

The rise of gasoline prices draining our wallets has brought increased attention to alternate fuels and related technologies. At our meeting this month Glenn Schulz, W9IQ, will talk with us about alternate fuels in general, and hydrogen fuel cell technologies specifically. Glenn will debunk ethanol myths, touch on the history of the fuel cell, show what makes a fuel cell work, and discuss present day fuel cell applications. The presentation will be capped of with a demonstration of a working fuel cell that converts water to hydrogen and then consumes the hydrogen to generate electricity.



Cane Garden Bay

Glenn at operating position
Tortola Island, BVI IOTA NA-023

Repeater Update

The MRAC Repeater Technical Committee

From time to time the Repeater Technical Committee reviews the status and operation of the club repeater. From a technical standpoint the repeater is working well. With the exception of a problem with a decoder board in August, the machine has worked flawlessly. The decoder problem was so rare that it had never been seen by experts with 20+ years of experience with our equipment. Chalk one up for Murphy.

From an operational viewpoint, our repeater typically enjoys very professional amateur radio operators. When our machine first went on the air at its present location with significantly improved coverage and quality of operation it encountered a period of time during which we needed to occasionally give the repeater what we affectionately called 'time-outs' (not the transmission was too long kind; the 3 year-old mis-behaving kind). In general, our users are professional and courteous amateurs.

However we have recently noted an increase in unidentified transmissions on our repeater. These take two forms. One is operators 'forgetting' to ID every 10 minutes and at the end of the QSO. While not legal, this happens on occasion. Chalk it up to old age, a busy life, etc. It is better that you as a friend on-the-air remind your on-air contact to ID than to have an OO send one of those reminder cards.

The other trend noticed recently is a few repeater users are sending unidentified transmissions to cut short the repeater voice IDs causing them to convert to CW IDs (much longer CW IDs). Regardless of the reasoning behind this activity (we like to think this is a show of support for continued CW operation following the elimination of the code requirement), it is not professional (or legal) amateur radio operation. This type of mis-behavior isn't remedied by giving repeater time-outs. The transmissions are also so short that using DFing techniques isn't effective. The technical committee is looking into a higher tech approach to discourage this activity using DSP (Digital Signal Processing) technology to fingerprint the transmitter. There are slight variations in every radio when the carrier is dropped that can be identified with DSP analysis. The idea is to note how often various radios 'accidentally' transmit without an ID. When a particular radio is having too many 'accidents', it will be compared against transmissions with IDs. The ability to record OTA digitally simplifies this effort. Finding a correlation will likely result in contact with an OO. The technical committee has better things to do with their time. They can work on improvements to the system or monitor the system OR users can self-police in the best of amateur traditions. The choice is up to our repeater users. Let's hope a word to the wise. A final note: There are other repeaters in the area with more and longer voice announcements. Check them out and remember we do cooperate with them.

2008 FM Simplex Contest Wrap-Up

By Joe, N9UX

This year saw a few changes in the FM Simplex Contest: the return to sprint format, the club call (W9RH) on the air, and promotion in QST's Contest Corral. The cold weather definitely played a part in the competition; my log notes -4º Fahrenheit at the start of the contest.

Certificates went to the following participants:

Dave, KA9WXN, in top score Base category,

Mike, WB8BZK, top score Mobile category also 1st Place, 2m, 70cm, 6m (tie),

John, K9JK, top score HT station, also 1st Place 1.25m, 6m (tie)

Joel, W9JFK, 2nd Place 2m band

Badger Contesters, top score Club category, also engraved on the Plaque at AES

We had several notes of interest during the contest: WB8BZK and K9JK circled the four grids in the Chicago area to work all four grids on four bands, resulting in some big scores! Several stations were out mobile in the Milwaukee area, helping out the scores here around town. A number of new calls went in the log this year; always good to see new folks joining in.

The log which traveled the farthest to get to Milwaukee came from Gordon Phoon, KC2SRY, a fourth grader from New York state. This was his first contest, and he participated with his father Colin, AE3A.

Weather conditions prevented operating the club station W9RH out in the field, but we managed to get on the air operating from my home QTH. 2m and 70cm was from inside the house; 6m and 1.25m were operated from my truck in the driveway. That was a little chilly!

I would like to make note of the folks who help put the contest together, assisting with the rules, promotion, and award creation: Brian, K9LCQ; Jeff, K9VS; Mark, AB9CD; and Sherm, KB9Q.

Thanks to everyone who participated and supported the contest this year, hope to see you all on the air in the 2009 contest!

EVENTS

MRAC Membership Meeting
Thu. -Apr. 24 , 2008
Nominations for Election of Officers
www.w9rh.org

3rd Annual Central WI SwapFest
Sat. - Apr. 26, 2008
Colby Lions Pavilion
Colby, WI
T/I on 147.75/147.15 (PL 114.8)

Cedarburg SwapFest
Sat. - May 3, **2008**
Circle B Recreation Center
Cedarburg, WI
T/I on 146.97- (127.3 tone)

Dayton Hamvention
Fri - Sun - May 16 -18, 2008
Trotwood, Ohio

MRAC Membership Meeting
Thu. -May 29, 2008
Annual Auction and Election of Officers and Two Board members
www.w9rh.org

Princeton HamFest, *
Computer & Hobby Show
June 1, 2008
Bureau Co. Fairgrounds
Princeton Illinois,
http://www.qsl.net/w9mks/hamfest.htm

MRAC Membership Meeting
Thu. -June 26 , 2008
www.w9rh.org

ARRL Field Day 2008
Sat.. & Sun. - Jun. 28 & 29
Pioneer Village
Cedarburg, WI

SMARC **SwapFest '08**
Sun. July 6, 2008
American Legion Post 434
Oak Creek, WI
T/I 146.52 simp

* indicates VE testing is available.

VE NEWS
BY TOM, KF9PU

We had a nice test session during AES SuperFest. Forty-five candidates stopped by. Of those, 33 walked away as new or upgraded hams. VEs who assisted us were:

Brian White.....K9LCQ
Larry Noldan.....NZ9I
Mark Tellier.....AB9CD
Tony Kolar AB9PN
Hal Newton KB9OZN
David Cannady...KF6GWY
Mark Bye KB9LDX
Bob Diehl WB9KMT

Our next test session will be on April 26 at AES. We'll test from 9:30 until 11:00 a.m.

VEC financial report for March:

Beginning balance: $4,171.59
Income: $245.00
Expenses: 0
Ending balance: $4,416.59

REMINDERS

Please check into our nets on Thursday and Friday evenings.

Our **Six Meter SSB net** is Thursday @ 8:00 p.m. at **50.160** MHz USB

Our Ten Meter SSB net is Friday at 8:00 p.m. at **28.490** MHz ± 5 KHz USB.

Our **Two Meter FM** net follows at 9:00 p.m. on our repeater at **145.390** MHz, minus offset and a PL of 127.3 Hz.

Join us for Saturday Morning Breakfast at Maxim's Restaurant, 18025 W. Capitol Dr.

We usually meet at around 8:00 a.m., and order around 8:15 a.m. The food and the company are good and you don't have to be a member of the club to join us.

CQ Third Tuesday

Come to CQ Third Tuesday at:
Old Country Buffet
16750 West Bluemound Rd.
Brookfield, WI

This gathering of HAMs meets on the third Tuesday of every month.

We start arriving there at 11:00 a.m. and leave when we're full and/or all talked out.

EXAM SCHEDULE
BY TOM FUSZARD, KF9PU

MRAC VEC
Exam Schedule
For upcoming Test Sessions:

Apr. 26 **9:30 a.m. @ AES**

May 31 9:30 a.m. @ AES

For details, check out:

www.w9rh.org/testing.htm/

AES = Amateur Electronic Supply
5710 W. Good Hope Rd.
Milwaukee, WI

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The **next meeting** of **MRAC**
will be **Thursday, April 24, 2007**
at 7:00 p.m.
Redemption Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall
4057 N. Mayfair Rd.
(Use the south entrance)
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE

Please, DON'T call the church.

Our Repeater,
Talk it up.
145.390– MHz
(127.3 Hz PL)

Glenn Schulz, W9IQ,
will be our featured
speaker for the
April 24th
MRAC general meeting
whose topic will be
Fuel Cells and other Alternative Sources of Energy.

Visit our website at: **www.w9rh.org**
Our phone (414) 332-MRAC
332-6722

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First Class